

## SUCCESS STORY Innovation Is In Our Nature

### KITSAP COUNTY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TASK FORCE ADDRESSES CRITICAL PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE

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The Kitsap County Domestic Violence Task Force (DVTF), which was formed in 1995, addresses one of the most serious public health issues facing the Kitsap community. The goal of the DVTF is to increase the safety of domestic violence victims and to hold perpetrators accountable through an effective coordinated community response. Strategies are aimed primarily at building community awareness and stronger coordination. The DVTF has members from a diversity of organizations that deal with domestic violence issues. The organizations include: probation, women's shelters, prosecutor's office, military, law enforcement, business, social services, DSHS Children and Family Services, victim's services and government.

#### **How did Kitsap County Domestic Violence Task Force and Commerce help solve the problem?**

To support these goals the DVTF holds regular Board meetings, an annual community-wide conference, professional and community training, community networking meetings, a community picnic and community-wide distribution of a resource guide for domestic violence victims, a quarterly newsletter and a website.

**Results:** In 1998 and 1999, Kitsap County's rates for domestic violence offenses were significantly higher than the State rates. (Source: 2007 County Profile on Risk and Protection for Substance Abuse Prevention, Department of Social and Health Services, p.38.) In 2007, the rate for domestic violence offenses was lower than the State - Kitsap County 4.6 per 1000 and Washington State 5.8 per 1000. From 1998 - 2007 the rate decreased by 5.6% per year. A parallel trend taken from the same source shows a steady decline of about 3% per year in the divorce rates in Kitsap County since 1998. Domestic violence filings processed and reported in the Kitsap County Prosecuting Attorneys Annual Report have also decreased on average 5 filings per year from 2003-2007. (This trend data was provided by the Kitsap County Health District Epidemiology Department.)

This reduction in domestic violence offenses is especially remarkable in light of the fact that from 1998 - 2007, Kitsap County continued to have a rate of adult violent crime arrests (other than domestic violence) higher than Washington State and Counties Like Us. (Source: 2008 County Profile on Risk and Protection for Substance Abuse Prevention, Department of Social and Health Services, p.17.)

**Summary:** The DVTF has played a significant role, through the implementation of community mobilization strategies since 1995, in creating a community that is educated about, and effectively responsive to, the issues of domestic violence. The current DVTF budget is composed of approximately 10% private and 90% Community Mobilization funds. Without CM funds, the work of the KCDVTF would be severely curtailed.



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